

News release

Driest winters for over 80 years

23 February 2006

Parts of southern England have had the driest two consecutive winters since 1920-22.

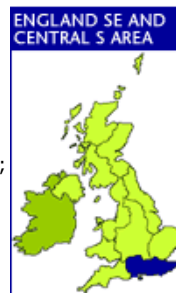
Figures released by the Met Office today show that South-east and central southern England have had:

- the driest November 2004-January 2006 in over 80 years, with just 724 mm of rain;
- November 2004 to January 2006 was the second driest 15-month period on record¹;
- 13 of the last 15 months have recorded below the 1961-1990 long-term average, having only 72% of the average which is 1001 mm.

According to the Met Office's long-range forecasting expert Dr Richard Graham, the outlook for the next few months is uncertain.

"There are significant uncertainties in seasonal prediction, however, in terms of rainfall, it looks as though it could be drier than normal in the north although there are equal probabilities of dry, normal or wet weather for the south of the country."

The Met Office works closely with Environment Agency and water companies to monitor levels of rainfall. Met Office information has been used as part of the Environment Agency's 2006 Drought Prospects Report².



[More about the dry spell](#)

Notes for editors

1. The rainfall series goes back to 1914.
2. The [Drought Report](#) is available online.
3. [Regularly updated data](#) on the dry spell are available.
4. In hydrological terms the 'water year' runs from October to September; with September being the time when ground water levels are expected to be at their lowest. The period from October to the end of April is the time when water levels are expected to 'recharge'. A dry winter period is more critical than a dry summer period.

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